

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Danny LaCasse, #164291,) C/A No. 4:06-1601-TLW-TER
)
Petitioner,)
)
v.)
) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
County of Horry;)
State of South Carolina,)
)
Respondents.)

Danny LaCasse (Petitioner), proceeding *pro se*, is a pretrial detainee at the J. Reuben Long Detention Center, and he files this action *in forma pauperis* under 28 U.S.C. § 1915.¹ Petitioner filed his petition captioned as a “Petition for a Writ of Certiorari.”² The relief requested by Petitioner is that “a writ of certiorari be served on Horry County for violating [his] constitutional rights.”³ Petition at 3. Petitioner states that he has been in custody since July 17, 2005, and he alleges that he is being held in violation of his rights to due process and to a speedy trial. Because *pro se* filings are afforded liberal construction, this petition is construed as a petition for habeas relief under 28

¹ Pursuant to the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1), and Local Rule 73.02(B)(2), D.S.C., the undersigned is authorized to review such petitions for relief and submit findings and recommendations to the District Court.

²This Court does not have appellate jurisdiction of state court criminal cases, thus a writ of certiorari is not available.

³Petitioner also requests recovery of \$500 pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 17-17-170 (1976) for the solicitor’s failure to timely bring Petitioner before the court under S.C. Code Ann. § 17-17-80 (1976). Although Petitioner requests monetary recovery, this action is not construed as a civil rights action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 because the state statutory provisions the Petitioner relies on for monetary relief do not present grounds for a civil rights claim.

U.S.C. § 2241. This petition should be dismissed because this Court should abstain from considering the petition under *Younger v. Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971).

Pro Se and In Forma Pauperis Review

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* petition filed in the above-captioned case. The review was conducted pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915, 1915A, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, and in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Md. House of Corr.*, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995); *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); *Boyce v. Alizaduh*, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979). This Court is required to construe *pro se* petitions liberally. Such *pro se* petitions are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, *see Gordon v. Leake*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. *See Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9 (1980); *Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972).

When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* petition, the petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. *See Fine v. City of New York*, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2d Cir. 1975). However, even under this less stringent standard, the petition submitted in the above-captioned case is subject to summary dismissal. The requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the Court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *See Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990).

Discussion

Ordinarily, federal habeas corpus relief for a state prisoner is available post-conviction. However, *pretrial* petitions for habeas corpus are properly brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241, “which applies to persons in custody regardless of whether final judgment has been rendered and regardless of the present status of the case pending against him.”” *United States v. Tootle*, 65 F. 3d 381, 383 (4th Cir. 1995) (quoting *Dickerson v. Louisiana*, 816 F. 2d 220, 224 (5th Cir. 1987)). Generally, “an attempt to dismiss an indictment or otherwise prevent a prosecution” is not attainable through federal habeas corpus. *Dickerson*, 816 F. 2d at 226.

“In *Younger* [v. *Harris*, 401 U.S. 37 (1971)], the Supreme Court plainly declared that federal court equitable interference with state criminal proceedings should not be undertaken except in the most narrow and extraordinary of circumstances.” *Gilliam v. Foster*, 75 F.3d 881, 903 (4th Cir. 1996). The *Younger* Court noted that courts of equity should not act unless the moving party has no adequate remedy at law and will suffer irreparable injury if denied equitable relief. *Younger*, 401 U.S. at 43-44. “In *Younger* and its progeny, the Supreme Court generally has found abstention appropriate if the following three-pronged test has been met: 1/ there are ongoing state judicial proceedings; 2/ the proceedings implicate important state interests; and 3/ there is an adequate opportunity to raise federal claims in the state proceedings.” *Martin Marietta Corp. v. Md. Comm'n on Human Relations*, 38 F. 3d 1392, 1396 (4th Cir. 1994) (citing *Middlesex County Ethics Comm'n v. Garden State Bar Ass'n*, 457 U.S. 423, 432 (1982)).

The petition indicates that the petitioner was extradited from Montana and has been in custody since July 15, 2005 for a crime allegedly committed in 2002. Clearly an ongoing state criminal proceeding exists as required by the first prong of the *Younger* test. The second prong has been addressed by the Supreme Court’s statement that “the States’ interest in administering their

criminal justice systems free from federal interference is one of the most powerful of the considerations that should influence a court considering equitable types of relief.” *Kelly v. Robinson*, 479 U.S. 36, 49 (1986). The Supreme Court also addressed the third prong in noting “that ordinarily a pending state prosecution provides the accused a fair and sufficient opportunity for vindication of federal constitutional rights.” *Gilliam v. Foster*, 75 F. 3d 881, 903 (4th Cir. 1996) (quoting *Kugler v. Helfant*, 421 U.S. 117, 124 (1975)).

Specifically, federal habeas relief is available under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 only if “special circumstances” justify the provision of federal review. *Dickerson*, 816 F. 2d at 224-26; *see also Braden v. 30th Judicial Circuit Court*, 410 U.S. 484, 489-90 (1973). While the term “special circumstances” lacks any precise, technical meaning, courts have essentially looked to whether procedures exist that would protect a petitioner’s constitutional rights without pre-trial intervention. *Moore v. DeYoung*, 515 F. 2d 437, 449 (3d Cir. 1975). Thus, where a threat to the petitioner’s rights may be remedied by an assertion of an appropriate defense in state court, no special circumstance is shown. *Id.*; *see, e.g., Drayton v. Hayes*, 589 F. 2d 117, 121 (2d Cir. 1979) (finding double jeopardy claim entitled to pretrial habeas intervention since “the very constitutional right claimed . . . would be violated” if petitioner were forced to go to trial). Where the right may be adequately preserved by orderly post-trial relief, special circumstances are likewise nonexistent. *Moore*, 515 F. 2d at 449.

Petitioner claims denial of a speedy trial, which appears to also be the underlying issue in his claim of deprivation of due process of law. In *Moore*, 515 F. 2d at 443, the court concluded that the federal court should abstain from considering a speedy trial claim at the pre-trial stage because the claim could be raised at trial and on direct appeal. *See generally United States v. MacDonald*, 435

U.S. 850 (1978); *Dickerson*, 816 F. 2d at 226-27. Petitioner can pursue his claims in state court both during and after trial, so he fails to demonstrate “special circumstances,” or to show that he has no adequate remedy at law and will suffer irreparable injury if denied pursuit of a speedy trial in state court through this forum. *See Younger*, 401 U.S. at 43-44. Petitioner is therefore precluded from federal habeas relief at this time, and his Petition should be dismissed.

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court dismiss the petition *without prejudice* and without requiring the respondents to file an answer. *See Allen v. Perini*, 424 F.2d 134, 141 (6th Cir. 1970) (stating federal district courts have duty to screen habeas corpus petitions and eliminate burden placed on respondents caused by ordering an unnecessary answer or return) and the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996. The petitioner's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

Respectfully Submitted,

s/Thomas E. Rogers, III

Thomas E. Rogers, III
United States Magistrate Judge

September 11, 2006
Florence, South Carolina

Notice of Right to File Objections to Magistrate Judge's "Report and Recommendation"
& The Serious Consequences of a Failure to Do So

The petitioner is hereby notified that any objections to the attached Report and Recommendation must be filed within **ten (10) days** of the date of its filing. 28 U.S.C. § 636 and Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6. Based thereon, this Report and Recommendation, any objections thereto, and the case file will be **delivered to a United States District Judge** fourteen (14) days after this Report and Recommendation is filed. A magistrate judge makes only a recommendation, and the authority to make a final determination in this case rests with the United States District Judge. See Mathews v. Weber, 423 U.S. 261, 270-271 (1976).

During the period for filing objections, but not thereafter, a party must file with the Clerk of Court specific, written objections to the Report and Recommendation, if he or she wishes the United States District Judge to consider any objections. **Any written objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections.** See Keeler v. Pea, 782 F. Supp. 42, 43-44 (D.S.C. 1992). Failure to file specific, written objections shall constitute a waiver of a party's right to further judicial review, including appellate review, if the recommendation is accepted by the United States District Judge. See United States v. Schronce, 727 F.2d 91, 94 & n. 4 (4th Cir.), cert. denied, Schronce v. United States, 467 U.S. 1208 (1984); and Wright v. Collins, 766 F.2d 841, 845-847 & nn. 1-3 (4th Cir. 1985). Moreover, if a party files specific objections to a portion of a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation, but does not file specific objections to other portions of the Report and Recommendation, that party waives appellate review of the portions of the magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation to which he or she did not object. In other words, a party's failure to object to one issue in a magistrate judge's Report and Recommendation precludes that party from subsequently raising that issue on appeal, even if objections are filed on other issues. Howard v. Secretary of HHS, 932 F.2d 505, 508-509 (6th Cir. 1991). See also Praylow v. Martin, 761 F.2d 179, 180 n. 1 (4th Cir.) (party precluded from raising on appeal factual issue to which it did not object in the district court), cert. denied, 474 U.S. 1009 (1985). In Howard, supra, the Court stated that general, non-specific objections are *not* sufficient:

A general objection to the entirety of the [magistrate judge's] report has the same effects as would a failure to object. The district court's attention is not focused on any specific issues for review, thereby making the initial reference to the [magistrate judge] useless. * * * This duplication of time and effort wastes judicial resources rather than saving them, and runs contrary to the purposes of the Magistrates Act. * * * We would hardly countenance an appellant's brief simply objecting to the district court's determination without explaining the source of the error.

Accord Lockert v. Faulkner, 843 F.2d 1015, 1017-1019 (7th Cir. 1988), where the Court held that the appellant, who proceeded *pro se* in the district court, was barred from raising issues on appeal that he did not specifically raise in his objections to the district court:

Just as a complaint stating only 'I complain' states no claim, an objection stating only 'I object' preserves no issue for review. * * * A district judge should not have to guess what arguments an objecting party depends on when reviewing a [magistrate judge's] report.

See also Branch v. Martin, 886 F.2d 1043, 1046 (8th Cir. 1989) ("no de novo review if objections are untimely or general"), which involved a *pro se* litigant; and Goney v. Clark, 749 F.2d 5, 7 n. 1 (3rd Cir. 1984) ("plaintiff's objections lacked the specificity to trigger *de novo* review").

This notice apprises the petitioner of the consequences of a failure to file specific, written objections. See Wright v. Collins, supra; and Small v. Secretary of HHS, 892 F.2d 15, 16 (2nd Cir. 1989). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections addressed as follows:

**Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
Post Office Box 2317
Florence, South Carolina 29503**